



# **Finding Your Fit: Researching & Choosing the Right College**

**PRESENTED BY  
COLLEGEWISE**



**Poll time!**

Who is joining us today?

# COLLEGEWISE MISSION



Our mission to families and educators

“—  
|

Is to be the **most trusted source**  
of expert advice to help students  
access the transformative power  
of higher education.

—”  
|



# WHO ARE WE?

Since 1999, Collegewise has mastered simplifying the college application process for students. Here's why 30,000+ families have trusted Collegewise:



**Personalized Approach**



**Seasoned Experts**



**Referral Based**



**Local Knowledge**



**Global Expertise**



**Collective Wisdom**



AS SEEN IN



**Forbes**

**The  
New York  
Times**

**BUSINESS  
INSIDER**

**GOOD  
MORNING  
AMERICA**



# YOUR PRESENTERS

ACT®

COLLEGE  
WISE



## **Karen Kimball**

*Collegewise Counselor*

- Former teacher at the University of North Texas Honors College
- Over 25 years in the education space as a teacher and admissions counselor
- Her students have gained admission to colleges such as UCLA, Clemson, Boulder, and more!

# YOUR PRESENTERS

ACT®

COLLEGE  
WISE



## **Allison Lopour**

*Master Collegewise Counselor & Chief  
People Officer*

- Former admissions counselor at the University of Redlands
- Personally reviewed over 1,000 college applications
- Counseled over 500 students at Collegewise since 2007

# YOUR PRESENTERS

ACT®

COLLEGE  
WISE



## **Paul Kanarek**

*The Princeton Review Founder and former  
Collegewise CEO*

- Founded The Princeton Review (California) in 1983
- Collegewise CEO in 2025, current board member and advisor
- Globally recognized admissions expert who has presented more than 500 talks worldwide
- 40 years of college admissions experience

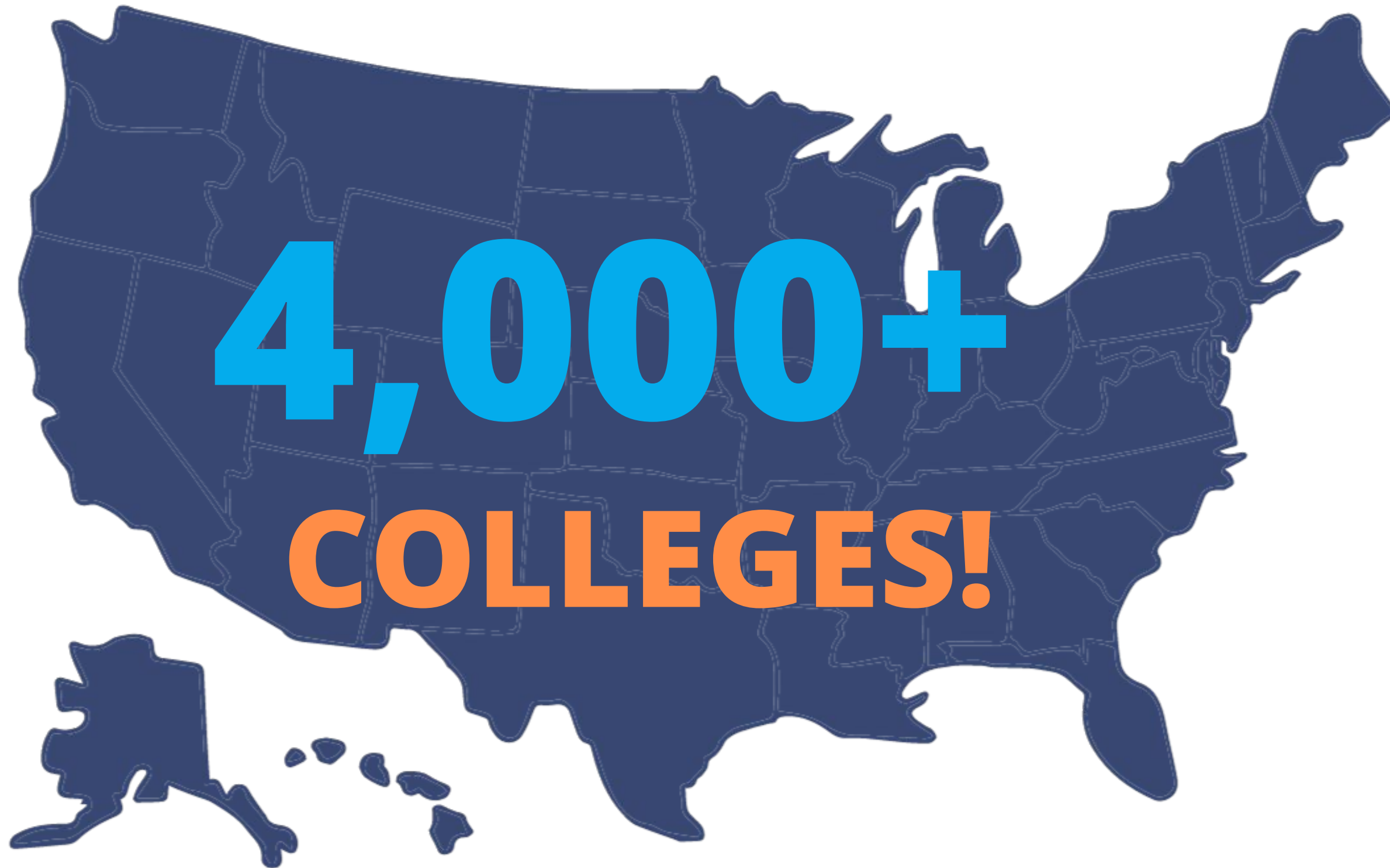




# The College Landscape



# COLLEGE LANDSCAPE



# AGENDA



**1**

**Types of colleges to consider**

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**2**

**Where to begin the college research process**

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**3**

**How to conduct thorough research**

**4**

**How to create a balanced list**

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**5**

**College list checklist**

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**6**

**Next steps and Q&A**



# Step #1

Consider college options and  
ask thoughtful questions



# TYPES OF COLLEGES



**Private Colleges**



**Public Colleges**



**Curriculum Choices**



**Community Colleges**

# COLLEGE CONSIDERATIONS



- SIZE AND LOCATION
- ADMISSIONS PROBABILITY
- ACADEMIC OPTIONS
- EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
- AFFORDABILITY
- FUTURE CAREER PATHWAYS

## COLLEGEWISE

### PRO TIP:

Beyond these core six, make a list of non-negotiable considerations, big and small. These may include, food options, nightlife, safety, diversity, political climate, etc.

# FIRST QUESTIONS TO ASK



**01** Why do you want to go to college?

**02** Do you think you're ready to go to college?

**03** How have you done your best learning?

**04** What would you like to learn more about?



# MORE QUESTIONS TO ASK



**01** What's your ideal academic environment?

**02** What's your family's college budget?

**03** What career aspirations do you have?

**04** What type of community is best for you?

# ASKING SMARTER QUESTIONS



 **Instead of:**

Is this school good or bad?

 **Instead of:**

What's the right college?

 **Instead of:**

What's the best college?

 **Try this:**

Is this school good for me? What are its strengths?

 **Try this:**

What are my priorities and where will I be successful?

 **Try this:**

What's the best college for me? Where can I thrive?

# HOW MAJOR IS MY MAJOR?



## **SELECTED**

### **MAJORS**

The admissions process and requirements can vary by major.

### **REMEMBER:**

Some school acceptance rates can also be drastically different depending on the major.

## **CONSIDER**

1. How competitive is this particular program?
2. How do you as an applicant fit in this specific applicant pool?
3. How much does a potential career drive your decision?

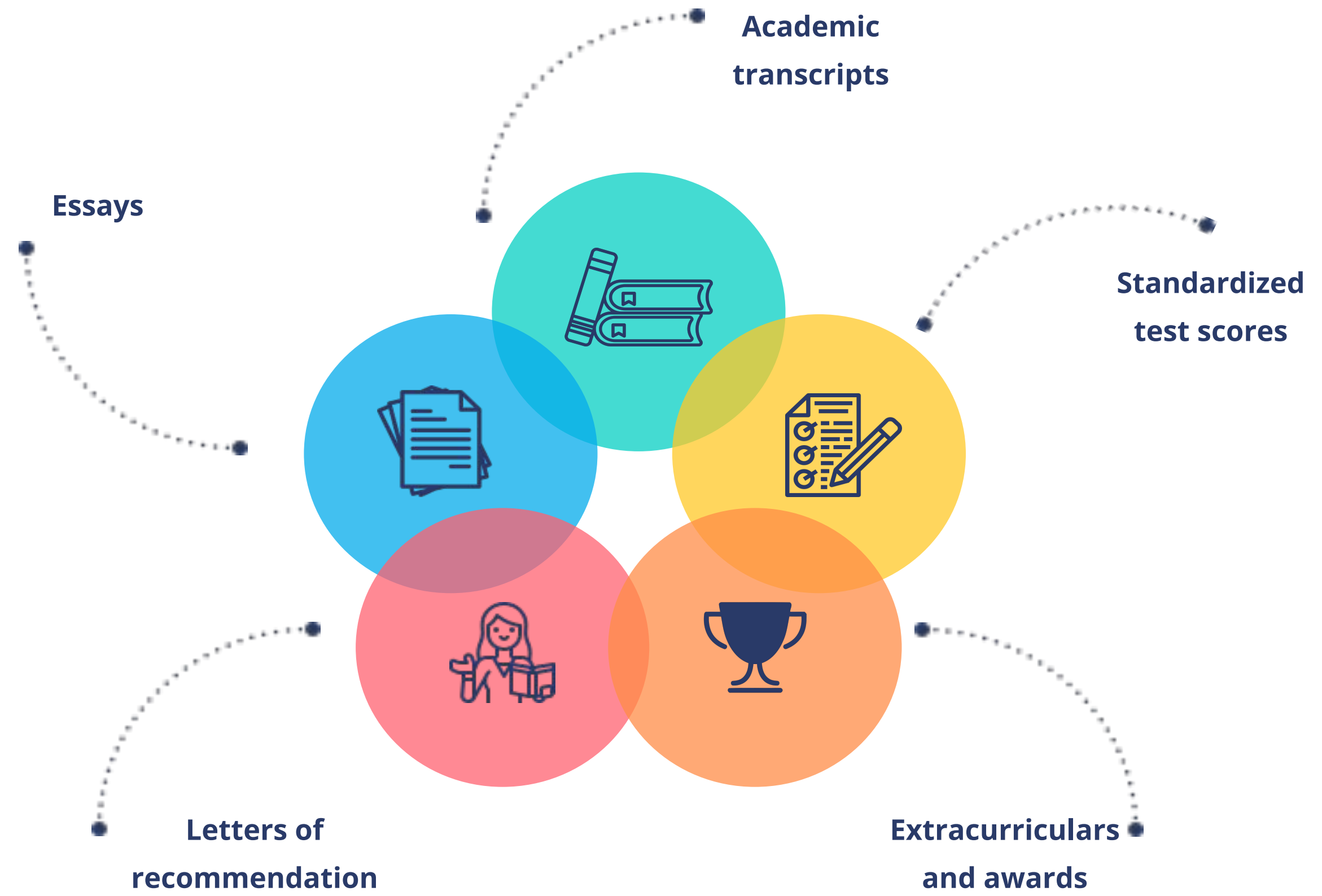
## **COLLEGEWISE**

### **PRO TIP:**

**Always refer to school websites for up-to-date information.**



# FACTORS IN HOLISTIC ADMISSION



# WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR



**01** Curious learners

**02** Engaged leaders

**03** Community builders



# Step #2

Conduct thorough college  
research

# STARTING COLLEGE RESEARCH



## Window Shopping

What are the basic need-to-knows of a college?

## Browse the Aisles

Take a deeper look at what the school offers its students.

## Try it On

Does the college meet your expectations?

## Full Price Item

Determine the college costs, financial aid offerings, etc.



# RESEARCH: WINDOW SHOPPING



**01** Utilize college guidebooks

**02** Browse college website & resources

**03** Take advantage of what is in reach




## REMEMBER:

You don't need to spend money on college visits to see them. Students can gain valuable insight without getting on a plane!

# RESEARCH: BROWSING AISLES



## From colleges directly:

-  Admissions website
-  Academic programs, career services, and student outcomes
-  Research opportunities, clubs, or study abroad

## Other (unfiltered) resources:

-  Student news or media
-  Student reviews
-  Be a college student for the day



Collegewise Pro Tip:

Be mindful of college rankings websites. The one thing these rankings don't consider is **YOU** and how this college best fits your needs, wants, and interests!



# Step #3

Building a balanced college  
list

# BALANCED LIST BUILDING



LIKELY

TARGET

REACH



# COLLEGE LIST CHECKLIST



**1**

**Aim for between 8 to 12 colleges**

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**2**

**Create a balanced list of schools**

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**3**

**Make note of your “why” for each college**

**4**

**Start broad and narrow it down**

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**5**

**Good options vs. one “dream” school**

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**6**

**Consider affordability**

# COLLEGE CONSIDERATIONS



What are my chances?



Consider the following areas:

Overall acceptance rates

Range of GPA

Test score requirements and expectations

How involved the application process is



Collegewise Pro Tip:

Many schools post detailed information about their class, called Class Profiles. They also often post example successful essays.

# WHAT'S NEXT ON THIS JOURNEY? **ACT**<sup>®</sup>



**01**

## **Research starts now**

- Seniors, the time is now. Juniors, start early and pace yourselves. And 10th or younger, plan ahead.

**02**

## **Focus on yourself**

- You are unique and so is your college process.

**03**

## **Make a plan**

- Write it down and stick to it.



**Kickstart a less stressful,  
more successful process**



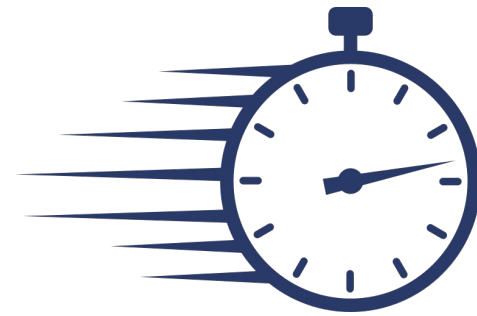
# WHY COLLEGEWISE?



**Collegewise is your one-stop shop as a trusted source of information.** At Collegewise, we believe there is something for everyone and we're thrilled to help you find the next step on this journey.



**Dedicated  
Counseling Programs**



**Expert Help from 8th  
grade through senior  
year**



**Complimentary  
Webinars & School  
Resources**

**30,000+** Students admitted.

**92%** student acceptance rate to their top three college choices.

**500+** years of admissions experience

**9/10** Referred by families.



# Poll time!

How can Collegewise best help you?



**SCAN  
HERE**  
to get  
started!



**Question &  
Answer Time**



Excellent



Based on 380 reviews

